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GEORGE HEMPL, 1859-1921

Through the untimely death of George Hempl, Professor of Germanic philology in Leland Stanford Junior University, the causes of linguistic research and of educational leadership in America suffer an inestimable loss. He was born in Whitewater, Wisconsin, received the baccalaureate degree in 1879 from the University of Michigan, and in 1889, the doctorate from the University of Jena, after three years of study at various German universities.

As principal of the Saginaw (Michigan) High School, 1879-82, and of the La Porte (Indiana) High School, 1882-84, he gained practical insight into the vital relation of secondary school education to the work of college and university. This experience was permanently helpful to him in articulating his subsequent work as a university teacher with that of the preparatory school. Two years as teacher of German in Johns Hopkins University, 1884-86, seventeen years as teacher of English, English philology, and general linguistics in the University of Michigan, 1889-1906, and fifteen years as professor of Germanic philology in Leland Stanford Junior University, 1906-21, make, with the secondary school experience just mentioned, a total of forty-two years of most stimulating and fruitful pedagogical leadership. There was something peculiarly winsome and inspiring in the personality of the man. No one who knew Professor Hempl failed to be impressed by his genial bearing, his generous estimate of the work of other men, his infectious interest in the problems of language and of teaching, and his undaunted courage that kept him steadily and cheerfully at work in spite of serious accident and failing health. He was a man of heroic mold.

His *Old English Phonology*, 1892, his *Chaucer's Pronunciation*, 1893, his *German Orthography and Phonology*, 1897, his *Phonetic Text of Wilhelm Tell*, 1900, together with his numerous papers upon problems of Germanic philology, are among the most valuable published expressions of his own research. As a phonetician of

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recognized ability and as a student of the history of alphabetic writing he became in the year 1908-9 especially interested in attempting to decipher Etruscan, Hittite, and other inscriptions of the Mediterranean basin. The record of his work in these fields is still largely in manuscript. The discoveries, however, which he believed he had made, are sufficiently numerous and important to make the world of scholars eager to examine his evidence and reasoning in detail. His reputation as a keen observer of speech phenomena, as a conservative and fair-minded judge of the facts observed by him, and as a lover of the truth, singularly devoid of pet prepossessions about the truth, encourages those who knew him and his work to expect much of permanent value from these latest lines of his research.

The death of Professor Hempl means for *Modern Philology* the loss of one of the ablest of its Advisory Board of Editors.

STARR WILLARD CUTTING